

## **STREAKED SHEARWATER *Calonectris leucomelas* IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

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Carter (1983) has drawn attention to the regular occurrence of this species in Northern Australian waters. Observations made on 17 February 1984 from T.S.M.V. Febrina, which was cruising between Darwin and Gove, (10° 53' .49s, 133° 39' .89e) additionally confirm this. The conditions were cloudy, with slight drizzle, and wave-height was about 1.5 metres.

At 16.40 a single Streaked Shearwater was seen flying past the vessel. Single birds and groups of three or four were seen regularly after this, until 17.15 hours, when a large group of birds was seen. A small cloud of fifty Sooty terns *Sterna fuscata* were working fifteen to twenty metres over a large 'raft' of about one hundred and fifty Streaked Shearwaters. They were settled on the ocean surface, which was erupting with tuna of about 0.5 kilo. As the tuna moved off to another area, the whole mass of birds would fly over to where the fish reappeared.

The only other Procellariidae seen with the Streaked Shearwaters were a Tahiti Petrel *Pterodroma rostrata* and a heavy, all dark-brown bird, of a similar size to *Calonectris leucomelas*, which I could not identify. M. Carter (in litt. to J.L. McKean, Mss. in prep.) has a number of unpublished sightings of *P. rostrata* off the N.T.

The tuna were identified by Helen Larson (N.T. Museum), also on the boat, as being probably Northern Bluefin *Thunnus tonggol*. These typically school and drive their food (fish and squid) to the surface.

### **Reference**

CARTER, M. 'Streaked Shearwaters in Northern Australia', Australian Birdwatcher 10(4):113-121.



*Figure 1: Streaked Shearwater — underwing and side-view. The painting was taken from a study-skin at the N.T. Museum. The dead bird was presented to the museum anonymously. Any information about the location of collection and date would be appreciated.*